

Message Text

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SUBJ: GAMBIAN PRESIDENT JAWARA DEDICATES SCHOOL BUILDING NAMED
FOR LATE AMERICAN CHARGE ROBERT T. BURKE

1. ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1974 SIR DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA
(PRONOUNCED DOW-DA KY-ROBBA JAH-WAH-RA), PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE GAMBIA, DEDICATED A STUDY HALL AND COMMUNITY CENTER

AT THE LAMIN (PRONOUNCED GXH-MEAN) AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL
CENTER NEAR BANJUL.

2. THE HALL IS NAMED AFTER ROBERT T. BURKE, AN AMERICAN FOREIGN
SERVICE OFFICER, WHO SERVED AS CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY, BANJUL FROM JAN TO AUG 1971. MR BURKE DIED WHILE
SERVING AT THIS POST.

3. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO SENEGAL AND THE GAMBIA, O. RUDOLPH
AGGREY, HERE TO ATTEND CEREMONIES MARKING THE 9TH ANNIVERSARY
OF GAMBIAN INDEPENDENCE, WAS PRESENT FOR THE DEDICATION BY PRESIDENT
JAWARA AS WERE MARIE T. BURKE (ROBERT T. BURKE'S WIDOW) AND HER
TWO DAUGHTERS.

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4. THE LAMIN AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL CENTER IS THE ONLY

AGRICULTURAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER OF ITS KIND
IN THE GAMBIA. IT TRAINS YOUNG GAMBIANS AS FARMERS AND URBAN
CRAFTSMEN AND IS THE CENTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY
IN THE VILLAGE OF LAMIN, 15 MILES
FROM BANJUL. THE SCHOOL PROVIDES CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THE SHIFT
IN EMPHASIS FROM PURELY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS TO GREATER CONCENTRATION
ON AGRICULTURAL AND VOCATION TRAINING
IN THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW
10 YEAR EDUCATION PLAN.

5. BURKE MEMORIAL HALL FORMS AN IMPORTANT UNIT OF THE ENTIRE SCHOOL
COMPLEX, TO WHICH CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONEY AND EQUIPMENT WERE MADE
BY OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE AGENCIES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANY, THE UK, IRELAND, DENMARK AND BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
GAMBIA, IN ADDITION TO THE UNITED STATES.

6. THE LATE ROBERT BURKE RECOGNIZED THE VALUE OF THE SCHOOL AND SOUGHT
WAYS TO ASSIST IT TO FULFILL ITS IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUPPORT OF
THE GAMBIA'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS. BURKE DRAFTED AN AGREEMENT WHEREBY
US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SELF HELP FUNDS WOULD
BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SCHOOL PROVIDED FACULTY, STUDENTS AND COMM-
UNITY
CRAFTSMEN DID THE ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION. AFTER MR BURKE'S DEATH,
THE AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED BY HIS SUCCESSOR CURTIS STRONG, WITH REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE SCHOOL AND GOVERNMENT. AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS HELP AND INTEREST,
SCHOOL AND GAMBIAN OFFICIALS DECIDED TO NAME THE BUILDING
BURKE MEMORIAL HALL.

7. THE HANDSOME HALL'S CONSTRUCTION IS LARGELY A COOPERATIVE EFFORT
OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY, AS ROBERT BURKE ENVISIONED IT, GIVING STUDENTS

THE VERY BEST ON THE JOB TRAINING, HELPING TO BUILD THEIR OWN SCHOOL.
DURING THE DAY IT SERVES THE SCHOOL'S 90 STUDENTS AS A STUDY HALL AND
EVENINGS IT WILL BE USED FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FOR STUDENT, ALUMNI
AND COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.
MCFARLAND

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